



## *The Signal experience*

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Signaleers maintain communications in spite of the harsh Kosovo winter. Signal equipment and shelters get a "ride" into place in Kosovo hooked to Chinook helicopters.

❖ *The challenges are real; the mission is global; the opportunities are limitless.*

"On arrival in Kosovo, we had to first set up the military communications. I had deployed with around 190 pieces of equipment - the highest from a single unit in our division. We set up the small extension nodes and node centers on the base camps and in five off-sites (Russians, Greeks, Poles, etc.). We connected them with line-of-sight shots, and the two base camps - BondSteel and Monteith - were connected by a dual troposcatter shot for redundancy.

"Task Force Signal was also called to go on many contingency missions to provide communications to different sectors of Kosovo. For instance, when American troops went to Mitroevka in the French sector, we had to send a communications detachment.

"After arrival I was temporarily sent to Monteith to act as G-6 and officer-in-charge for Signal at the base camp. That was a fantastic experience, as I got to see how the contracting process worked, and coordinated with engineers, mayor and contractors. We were essentially building a small city; we were the phone company and Internet service provider. We'd constantly meet with the mayor to establish the work priority and plan the next phase of the installation. We set up civilian communications for about 2,000 users. We installed the phone drops, Internet and satellite link back to the 'real world.'

"Also, we assisted the local phone company in repairing its service. Working with the interpreters and local people was fantastic. They were very happy to have us there, and that was nice to see as it's a great feeling knowing that our training and hard work was helping people.

"After civilian communications were established in Monteith, I returned to BondSteel to resume my company XO duties. It was a challenge keeping everything maintained, since the Kosovo winter weather was quite harsh. I worked quite a bit on getting commercial generators for future rotations, and I oversaw the three separate property books we had to keep.

"Being the company XO for a deployed Signal unit is definitely a challenging experience, but the opportunity to do a real-world mission and to accomplish different objectives was extremely rewarding. It was an experience in communications networking that you can't get in the civilian world or in other branches."